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THE GULL



GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 90

NO. 2

FEBRUARY 2005

FOUNDED 1917

Oakland Christmas Bird Count Draws More Birders

At midnight Sunday, December 19, the stars shone over Oakland, the winds were calm, and the temperature was moderate. What a welcome contrast with last year's windy, wet, predawn hours! At 3 a.m., the 64th annual Oakland Christmas Bird Count's first bird appeared: a curious Northern Saw-whet Owl caught in a flashlight beam in Redwood Regional Park. A great count day was officially under way.

By early morning, 203 birders had taken to the field, more than in any year since 1979. Blessed with good weather, they found 183 species (eight more than Oakland's recent average) and 94,000-plus individual birds, 10,000 fewer than the prior 10-year average but up from last year's 84,000.

Our owlers missed a Barn Owl for the first year since 1974, but found the other three usual nocturnal species. Daytime brought only one Burrowing Owl, at Cesar Chavez Park, but also a Short-eared Owl, reported only three times in the last 15 years.

A Red-naped Sapsucker in the Orinda area and a Green-tailed Towhee in the Moraga area were the first of those species recorded on the Oakland CBC during the last 31 years. They brought the cumulative Oakland CBC species list to 251. A Harlequin Duck was only the second recorded. Seen by the North Boat near the east anchorage of the Bay Bridge, it may be the same individual found last year.

Other unusual birds reported, in roughly decreasing order of rarity, included a Yellow Warbler in Berkeley, four Western Tanagers at Mills College, two Wilson's Warblers in the Pt. Isabel area, a Lesser Yellowlegs at the Oakland Airport, two Tufted Ducks at Lake Merritt, a Wandering Tattler seen from the South Boat along the Yerba Buena Island shoreline, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Berkeley, a Snow Goose in Orinda, a Common



Harlequin Duck

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, continued on page 10

Update on Casino Threat to Park

Last month we alerted you to a disastrous proposal to site a casino/hotel/event center/multi-story parking structure immediately adjacent to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park, the site of Arrowhead Marsh and our 72-acre restored wetland complex located on San Leandro Bay. The Lower Lake Rancheria Koi Nation has proposed a 250,000 square-foot casino with 2,000 slot machines and 100 gaming tables, four or five restaurants, a 1,000-seat auditorium, a day spa, and a 200-room hotel.

We urgently need your help to defeat this proposed project. Please see pages 11–12 describing what you can do.

Golden Gate Audubon has already submitted comments to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, citing the potential impacts of the project on birds and other wildlife and urging the agency to look for another location. Golden Gate Audubon staff and volunteers also have attended public meetings to express our opposition. We joined residents and community groups from nearby Oakland neighborhoods and from the cities of San Leandro and Alameda who fervently oppose a casino on this site. The entire Alameda County Board of Supervisors has adopted a resolution opposing it. While Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown and City Council member Larry Reid support the project, some members of the Oakland City Council have expressed their opposition, and others have not revealed their positions.

CASINO, continued on page 11

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ROSTER

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John Luther ('05)	Education
Allan Ridley ('05)	San Francisco Conservation
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Jacqui Smalley ('06)	Publications/Publicity
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Autumn Garrett ('07)	

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Leora Feeney	FAWR
Susan Groves	Field Trips
Elizabeth McNamee	Development
Bob Risenbrough	Latin America

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 15, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Society membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. Monthly meeting: second Friday in the West Bay; third Thursday in the East Bay, 7 p.m.

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Membership Renewals Schedule to Change in 2005

Golden Gate Audubon has a strong and growing membership program, which allows Bay Area residents who care about birds and other wildlife to support our organization through dues and become direct members in the chapter. While members may join Golden Gate Audubon through a National Audubon Society membership, we encourage everyone to join Golden Gate Audubon directly as a "Supporting Member" in order to strengthen our many local conservation, education and birding programs.

As of January 2005, we are making some significant changes to our membership program as we change to an annual renewal system. This means that we are asking all of our Supporting Members to renew their memberships now — at the beginning of the year — for the 2005 calendar year. Your renewed membership will run with the calendar year, from January through December.

This new system will help streamline our administrative work by allowing us to send out all of our renewal mailings at the same time during the year. Reducing the workload for our very small office staff will enable us to contribute more of our resources to conservation and education programs that are the heart of what we do. We are also evaluating additional ways to improve our membership services and increase benefits to Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Members.

How Do I Renew?

If you made a contribution of \$25 or more to our 2004 year-end fundraising appeal, your donation has automatically renewed your Supporting Membership for the 2005 calendar year. Thank you again for your support!

If you did not renew your membership through the fundraising appeal, you will be receiving a membership renewal notice in the mail soon, inviting you to renew now. We urge you to renew soon, in order to reduce our office labor and ensure that you don't miss a single issue of *The Gull*!

If you are currently receiving *The Gull* as a member of National Audubon and you are not a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon, we urge you to join the chapter directly. Your membership dues are critical to supporting the conservation and education work we do here in the Bay Area.

We thank all of our members for your continued support. With your help, Golden Gate Audubon will continue to be a leader in Bay Area conservation and environmental education.

by Elizabeth Murdock, Executive Director

Staffing Changes at Golden Gate Audubon

Over the past year, our office needs have grown to demand a full-time office manager, rather than two part-time staff. We are sad to say goodbye to Kathryn Blake, who has served alternately as part-time administrative assistant, bookkeeper, and database manager for the past five years. She has also been central to our work with volunteers and, as a volunteer herself, a participant in the MLK Census and the National Park Service's Alcatraz Bird Count. Kathryn has been a tremendous asset to Golden Gate Audubon, and we will miss her very much. Tara Zuardo, our part-time office manager, will assume the full-time position of office manager. A graduate of U.C. Berkeley, Tara has studied English, anthropology, and environmental studies. We are delighted to welcome Tara in her expanded role. Our office will also now be open on Mondays.

Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill on Film

Having abandoned his aspiration to be a writer and musician, Mark Bittner accepted a job that gave him a rent-free apartment on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco. There he discovered the local flock of red-and-green parrots, also known as cherry-headed conures (*Arainga erythrogenys*). These birds native to South America fascinated him, and over the next several years Bittner came to know the habits of the entire flock and the personalities of individual parrots.

In his 2004 book *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*, Bittner tells the story of his relationship with the flock. On February 9, a documentary film of the same name by Judy Irving will premiere in the Bay Area at Landmark's Embarcadero Theater in San Francisco. Prior to the screening on opening night, audience members are invited to meet around dusk at Maritime Park, across the Embarcadero from the Ferry Terminal, to watch the parrots fly in to roost. Both Irving and Bittner will be present at the theater and will answer questions after the film is shown.

Irving worked on the film for more than six years. She spent months following Bittner

as he introduced her to the flock and its members. She discovered that he knows many of the birds so well that he can draw their family tree. As in the book, the subject of the 83-minute film becomes what Bittner learns about himself as much as what he learns and shares about the birds.

Bittner believes that the two-dozen-plus birds in the flock were originally caught in the wild and shipped from Ecuador and Peru for sale as pets. Some birds escaped from their owners. Others were released by owners unable to care for them. According to Bittner, the first pair came together and started breeding in the late 1980s, joined a few years later by other parrots of the same species. The birds have no trouble surviving in the city. Their intelligence rivals that of corvids, and the urban environment provides a plentiful food supply. The birds thrive largely on blackberries, loquats, apples, and other fruits in backyard gardens. Bittner feeds them sunflower seeds.

Irving, an award-winning filmmaker, is known for her documentaries on wetlands, wildlife, and habitat restoration. She created two shorts, on the Alameda Wildlife Refuge, produced by Golden Gate Audubon, and on Golden Gate Audubon's Save the Quail Campaign, both shown on KQED.

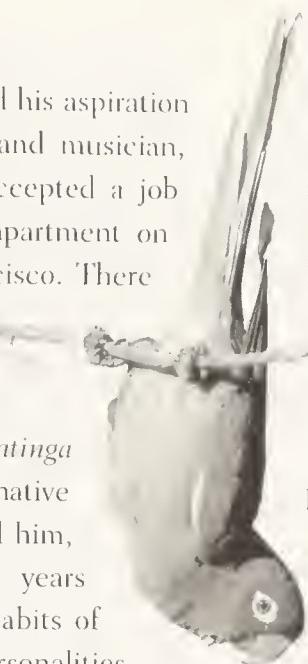
Since its release, *The Wild Parrots of San Francisco* has been recognized by several awards-granting organizations. It received the John C. Sweiger Audience Award at the Ashland Independent Film Festival in Oregon and has been nominated for the Golden Gate Awards, given by the San Francisco International Film Festival, to be held this spring.

The Wild Parrots of San Francisco will be screened at other theaters in the Bay Area—beginning on February 11 at Landmark's Act 1 and 2 in Berkeley and at the Nickelodeon Santa Cruz, and on February 16 at the San Rafael Film Center. For more information on the film, go to www.wildparrotsfilm.com.



Mark Bittner feeding the parrots in his Telegraph Hill neighborhood.

right Daniela Cossali; above) Mark Bittner



Mark Bittner's book, *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill: A Love Story...with Wings*, is now available in paperback. He will give a reading on February 6 at 4:30 p.m. at Bird and Beckett Books & Records, 2788 Diamond Street, San Francisco.

Film Screenings

- Feb. 9** Landmark's Embarcadero Theater, San Francisco
Feb. 11 Landmarks Act 1 and 2, Berkeley
Feb. 11 Nickelodeon, Santa Cruz
Feb. 16 San Rafael Film Center

Dan Richman, Birder and Poet

In a newly published collection of poems, Dan Richman, a member of Golden Gate Audubon's San Francisco Conservation Committee, observes the inhabitants, both animal and human, in the urban landscape and reflects on familiar places and neighborhoods and universal themes of friendship and love. Titled "Farming in San Francisco," the book is available from Fithian Press, P.O. Box 2790, McKinleyville, CA 95519, or online at www.danielpublishing.com.

Lone White Heron

That eye
atop the white wand
can tweak the deep sleep
of meadows
if it sees
a wink of silver
in the water. The neck
curls
forward
for an instant.
As if tied
to it, lines
to the horizon become
altered
routes. Marriages
of color
register
slight fever. Light falls
on shy things.

Kids' Letter Exchange Prompts Interest in Conservation

Good wishes and lessons learned about ecology are once again flying across the U.S.-Mexico border, as grade school students from eight classrooms in six East Oakland public schools correspond in Spanish with students in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve in Querétaro, Mexico.

This is the fourth year of the Mexico/USA Pájaro Pen Pal Project, sponsored jointly by Golden Gate Audubon's Eco-Oakland environmental education program and the Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda. The Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda is a nonprofit agency that protects the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve through grassroots efforts, including educating children in the region about conservation, ecology, and sustainable livelihood.

Before writing their letters, the students

in each fourth- and fifth-grade Oakland class took at least one field trip to Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park or another location and had a classroom session with staff and volunteers from Eco-Oakland. The students' letters are full of vignettes about their experiences (see excerpts below). Some of the classes also watched a slide presentation recently completed by the Latin America Committee (LAC) titled "Vamos a Conocer la Sierra Gorda" ("Let's Get to Know the Sierra Gorda"), which introduced them in a general way to their pen pals to be.

The letters clearly show that Golden Gate Audubon's message about the importance of conservation registered with the Oakland students and that the Golden Gate Audubon LAC presentation stirred their curiosity about their pen pals, their families, and their communities. The Oakland

students wrote their pen pals about their families and friends, as well as sports, animals, favorite foods, and favorite subjects in school.

At the same time, the students in Mexico were learning about recycling and conservation in their ecology classes. The Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda has a staff of 13 ecology teachers who visit the classrooms every six weeks to lead field trips and make classroom presentations.

The teachers in both the Oakland and the Sierra Gorda schools report that exchanging letters with new international friends is an enriching experience for their students that not only reinforces their lessons but generates international goodwill and understanding.

by Audre Newman
Secretary, Latin America Committee

Excerpts from the Oakland students' letters

"We went to Arrowhead marsh and the first activity was to find animals and trash that were in the water. After that we saw how much salt the water had. We saw little fish jumping in the water. And with binoculars, we saw all of the birds that were flying. Also we collected trash so that the water wouldn't be contaminated."

Geraldin, Ms. Martinez's class, Webster Academy

"...don't discard oil because it kills birds living in the water. If you throw trash and when it rains it goes to the sea and the birds eat it too."

Cristian, Ms. Ruiz's class, Markham Elementary School

"I have so many things to tell you, like the field trip that we took. My classmates and I went to Martin Luther King Park. In the trip, there were many birds, like the Red-tailed hawk (like an eagle), and finally the geese."

Reyna, Ms. Alvarez's class, Melrose Elementary School

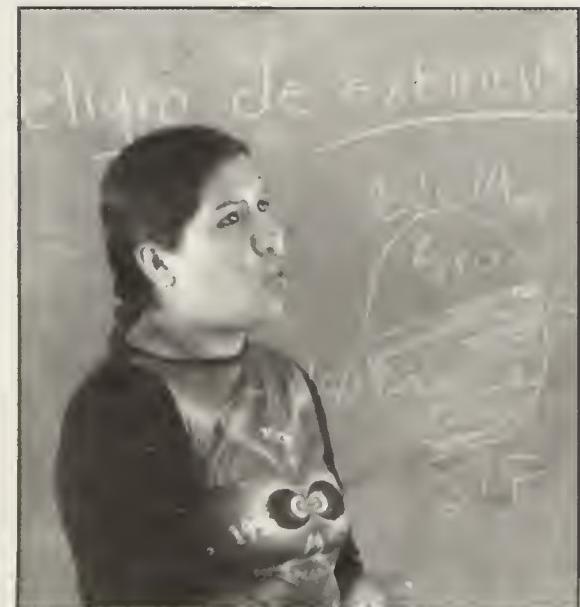
Excerpts from Mexican students' letters

"Today an ecology teacher came. She explained about glass, cardboard, cans, etc. I really like the theme of ecology. I like how you told me about the hummingbird. I didn't know that the hummingbird could flap its wings 400 times in 5 seconds."

Ana Laura, Sr. Raúl Rendon Hernandez's class, Jalpan

"The teacher who came taught about solid wastes. That means that which is organic and that which is inorganic. The organic waste is the banana peel, the orange peel, and lastly the fruit, and the inorganic trash is Coke bottles and cardboard, soda bottles, juice containers, and jelly jars, like all glass jars."

Marcella, Salvador Mauricio Tovar's class, Pinal de Amoles



Ariana, one of the ecology teachers from the Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda, gives a lesson on local endangered species.



Students in the Sierra Gorda write letters to their pen pals in Oakland.

PROGRAMS

Anne McTavish



Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. At 7 p.m., healthful, delicious snacks are served by hospitality coordinator, Susanne Shields. (All utensils, cups, and plates are made from corn, wheat, soy, and sugarcane by-products, and are compostable and break down in landfills in three weeks.) If you would like to suggest food and drinks for meetings or would like to help, call Susanne at 415.810.4900, or email susannekshields@yahoo.com. For information about upcoming events, detailed directions, or updates, see www.goldengateaudubon.org/Chapter/programs2005.htm.

Seeing the Red Owl: A Naturalist's Journey Into Madagascar

San Francisco

Friday, February 4*

Luke Cole

Join Luke Cole for an exploration of Madagascar's unique flora and fauna in his quest to see the elusive Red Owl, a journey that highlights the many challenges Madagascar faces in preserving its amazing natural heritage. Using his search for one of the world's rarest owls as a metaphor, Cole examines the impact of development, colonialism, political strife, eco-tourism and conservation on Madagascar. The cast of characters Cole encounters in his journey illustrate both the promise of, and difficulties in, preserving the Red Island's remaining rain and dry forests and their abundant wildlife. Cole uses images from his month in Madagascar and experiences from his nearly four years living in Africa, to tell a tale, by turns humorous and tragic but ultimately hopeful.

Luke Cole is an environmental and civil rights attorney and the director of the Center on Race Poverty & the Environment in San Francisco. He represents low-income communities fighting environmental hazards throughout the U.S. He is also chair of the California Bird Records Committee and a regional editor of North American Birds.

*Note change of date from normal schedule of monthly programs on 2nd Friday of the month.

County Fair building, Strybing Arboretum,

Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way

Directions: www.strybing.org/visiting/page2.html

Sights & Sounds of Kenya

Berkeley

Thursday, February 17

Peter Headland

Peter Headland, a Bay-Area resident, will share slides and sound recordings from a recent trip to Kenya. His presentation focuses on birds, but also includes photos of African mammals and their habitat.

Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin).

Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.html

More Pins Wanted for Map Project

The colorful world map adorning the wall in the meeting room of the Golden Gate Audubon office shows where our members have banded throughout the U.S. and the world. It would be greatly enhanced by more pins!

Let us know the states and countries (including some cities/areas) where you have banded so we can add pins to represent you. Just send in or e-mail your lists to the Map Project. Include your name and phone number in case we have questions. And when you travel, be sure to send us a bird postcard from some exotic place for our "Where-in-the-World?" bulletin board. Happy banding! E-mail: ggas@goldengateaudubon.org

by Marilyn Nasatir

Eighth Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

For this continent-wide event, observers are asked to record the number of each species they see from February 18–21 not only in backyards but also in local parks, school yards, and national wildlife refuges and other federal wildlands. Last year, participants submitted more than 42,000 checklists reflecting a total of 554 species. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, organizers of the count, use the findings to analyze the populations and migration times of various species and to determine which species are irruptive. For more information, go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc/.

Wanted: Energetic Volunteer to Plan East Bay Programs

Golden Gate Audubon is seeking a volunteer to organize our East Bay monthly programs. The programs feature speakers who give slide-illustrated talks on a wide variety of topics, ranging from birding adventures in exotic parts of the globe to birds of the Bay Area.

The job entails contacting potential speakers, scheduling appearance dates, introducing the programs, and ensuring arrangements are set up properly at the site.

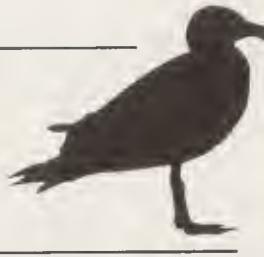
The East Bay programs are held at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month (except June, July, August & December) in Berkeley, at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda.

Hospitality Coordinator Susanne Shields provides delicious snacks and refreshments for the programs.

If you are interested in this fascinating and rewarding assignment, call Elizabeth Murdock, Executive Director, at 510.843.9912 or send e-mail to volunteer@goldengateaudubon.org.

FIELD TRIPS

Susan Groves



Birding for Children

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Saturdays, February 5 and March 5

Coleaders: Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis, San Francisco Nature Education, and Darin Dawson, San Francisco Botanical Garden docent, 415.387.9160, www.sfnature.org

Meet at 10 a.m. for this first Saturday of the month trip at kiosk/bookstore near main gate of San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. Trip ends at noon. This birding tour and nature hike for children ages 7 to 14 wends its way through the garden's microhabitats. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Bring binoculars and a pencil. Cosponsored by San Francisco Nature Education, San Francisco Botanical Garden, and Golden Gate Audubon.

Bicycle Trip: Arrowhead Marsh

Alameda County

Saturday, February 5

Leader: Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233
(no calls after 9pm), call for cell number,
kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 7:50 a.m. at Fruitvale BART Station in Oakland or at 8:10 a.m. at East Creek Point parking area. Trip will cover a loop from Fruitvale station to S.F. Bay Trail at East Creek Point, Damon Marsh, Arrowhead Marsh, and Doolittle Pond Wildlife Sanctuary, bicycle/pedestrian bridge from Bay Farm Island, to Alameda and Fernside Blvd., Fruitvale Bridge, and back to Fruitvale BART Station.

We will look for shorebirds and ducks on the marsh and bay, riding mainly on trails and on roads with bicycle lanes. Bring snacks and liquids, and dress for cool, windy weather. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. All levels of birders welcome.

Exit I-880 at High St. in Oakland and go .25 mi. southwest toward High St. Bridge to Alameda. Just before bridge, turn left onto Tidewater Ave. and go .25 mi. East Creek Point Parking Area is accessed to right. Fruitvale BART Station in Oakland is just south of Fruitvale Ave. between E. 12th St. and San Leandro Blvd. Call leader for other options. View BART schedules at www.transitinfo.org. Check Saturday schedules. Bay Trail info and maps are online at <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov/>



Strybing Arboretum

San Francisco

Sundays, February 6 and March 6

Coleaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241

For this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip, meet at 8 a.m. at front gate of arboretum, Ninth Ave. and Lincoln Way. See December *Gull* for details.

Hayward Regional Shoreline

Alameda County

Sunday, February 6

Coleaders: Pamela Llewellyn, 925.413.8329, seacreature219@sbcglobal.net; and Michael Butler, 510.684-3375, mjbkl@earthlink.net

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Winton Road access to Hayward Regional Shoreline for a half-day

walk over mostly level ground. We will bird around Franks Dump and Mount Trashmore and should see a nice mix of birds including a number of raptors, shorebirds, passerines, and several races of geese. Beginners welcome. Bring a scope if you have one.

Wednesday at Arrowhead Marsh

Oakland

Wednesday, February 9

Leader: Courtenay Peddle, 510.532.8911
(no calls before 9am), capeddle@there.net

Meet at Arrowhead Marsh parking lot at 9:30 a.m. to study and enjoy wintering birds. There are up to 14 species of ducks and always the possibility of seeing Clapper Rails. Bring scope if you have one. All levels of birders welcome.

Take I-880 south to Hegenberger Rd. exit, then go west on Hegenberger to Doolittle Dr. Turn right on Doolittle, then right onto Swan Way. Turn left into MLK park. Drive to end of road for Arrowhead Marsh parking lot.

Best of the Bayshore

Contra Costa and Alameda Counties

Saturday, February 12

Leader: Bob Power, 510.482.9601, rpower@sbcglobal.net

This East Bay bay-front driving tour will start at 8 a.m. at Miller/Knox Regional Park and end around 2 p.m. at Berkeley's Aquatic Park, with several stops in between. Meet at the last parking area on right at Dornan Dr. and Brickyard Cove Rd. Bring layers, liquids, and lunch. Beginners welcome.

Bicycle Trip: Sausalito to Larkspur Landing

Marin County

Saturday, February 12

Leader: Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233
(no calls after 9pm), call for cell number,
kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

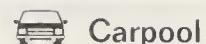
Trip begins at Golden Gate Ferry Terminal in S.F. or in Sausalito. Main birding areas will be Bothin Marsh in Mill Valley and Corte Madera Marsh. We will look for shorebirds and ducks in marshes and in bay, riding mainly on trails and on roads with bicycle lanes. The trip will not go to Tiburon. Bring lunch and liquids and dress for cool, windy



Contact Susan Groves, Field Trips Committee Chair, at 510.654.5954 or susangroves@att.net:

- if you can share a ride or if you need a ride,
- if you have difficulty reaching a leader and need information,
- if you have suggestions for trips, or
- if you are interested in leading a trip.

key



Carpool



Entrance fee required



Biking trip

weather. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. All levels of birders are welcome. Ferry leaves S.F. Ferry Bldg. at 10:40 a.m., arriving Sausalito at 11:10. Allow time for ticket purchase. Return is from Larkspur at 3:30 p.m., arriving at ferry bldg. at 4:20. There is a Park and Ride lot at north end of Sausalito at intersection of Highways 1 and 101. Cross to S.F. Bay Trail and wait for group to arrive at approximately 11:45 a.m.. If you park in Sausalito, you will have to return from Corte Madera independently.

S.F. Ferry Bldg. is at the foot of Market St. Embarcadero BART Station is two blocks away. View ferry and BART schedules at www.transitinfo.org. Remember to check Saturday schedules. Bay Trail info and maps are online at <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov/>. Marin County Bicycle Coalition info is at www.marinbike.org/Index.htm.



Lake Merritt

Oakland

Saturday, February 19

Leader: Travis Hails, 510.451.1207
(before 9 pm), travishails@yahoo.com

Meet at 8 a.m. at large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue Sts. Emphasis of trip will be on ducks and other water birds Lake Merritt. Beginners welcome. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have one.

Aquatic Park

San Francisco

Sunday, January 9

Leader: SF Maritime National Historical Park Ranger Carol Kiser
415.561.7100 or 561.7104

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at foot of Hyde Street Pier (Hyde and Jefferson) for this two-hour beginners' bird walk. Discover birds next door to the urban environment. Dress in layers. Trip is wheelchair accessible.

Western San Francisco

Saturday, February 12

Leader: Mark Eaton,
415.298.5128, mweaton@pacbell.net

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Merrie Way parking lot, just up the hill from the Cliff House, for a half-day ramble around western San Francisco. Detailed itinerary will be determined by weather conditions and recent sightings. The trip could involve significant

walking and will likely make several stops. Carpooling is recommended.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

Wednesday, February 23

Coleaders: Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066; Travis Hails, 510.451.1207, travishails@yahoo.com; and Ruth Tobey, ruthtobey@earthlink.net

Meet on lake side of Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue Sts. at 9:30 a.m. We will see who is visiting bird sanctuary, then stroll across park to garden area, aiming to reach it at 10 a.m. when it opens. After checking out the warblers, sparrows, and woodpeckers, we will return to lake about 11 and walk toward Embarcadero to view seasonal lake visitors. Trip will be on smooth, mostly level paths and lawns, with some mild slopes. Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins and walk to park on Perkins, or park in free lot at boathouse, 568 Bellevue. From parking lot, go past children's art center to far side of bird yard with freshwater ponds.

Las Gallinas Sewage Ponds

Marin County

Saturday, February 26

Leader: Bob Lewis,
510.845.5001, Rlewis0727@aol.com

Meet at 10 a.m. at parking lot for this 2–3 hour trip. We will see a variety of wintering ducks, shorebirds, and raptors. Take Highway 101 north and exit at Lucas Valley Dr. Go east on Smith Ranch Rd. to end. Take a sharp left to sewage treatment ponds, just before county park. Drive past headquarters to parking lot on left. Beginners are welcome.

Bicycle Trip: San Leandro to Hayward on S.F. Bay Trail

Alameda County

Saturday, February 26

Leader: Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233
(no calls after 9pm), call for cell number,
kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 8 a.m. at San Leandro BART or at 8:30 a.m. at San Leandro Marina Park, last parking lot. Expect to see birds on bay, in marsh, in fields, and aloft. We will bicycle along Bay Trail to Hayward Regional Shoreline, making a 14-mile round-trip excursion (20 miles if using BART). Adjacent to San Francisco Bay, the first portion of the

trail is paved; the remaining part is easily negotiable. Bicycle helmet required. Dress in layers, and bring lunch and liquids. All levels of birders are welcome. Rain cancels. From I-880 in San Leandro, take Marina Blvd. exit (west) and in 1.4 miles turn left onto Monarch Bay Dr. Go to end of last parking lot at San Leandro Marina Park. We will meet near restroom. Those traveling by BART will ride 3 mi. to San Leandro Marina Park using bike path on Williams St., just south of BART station. View BART schedules at www.transitinfo.org. Check Saturday schedules. Bay Trail info is online at <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov/>.



Presidio Bird Walk

San Francisco

Sunday, February 27

Leader: David Armstrong,
415.305.7681, darmstrong99@yahoo.com

Meet at 8 a.m. at parking lot at end of 15th Ave., just north of intersection of 15th Ave. and Lake St. Trip will be a 7-mile loop through diverse habitats of the Presidio. Trip finishes about 1 p.m. Wear walking shoes.

Honey Lake and Greater Sage-Grouse

Lassen County

Saturday and Sunday, March 12 and 13

Leader: Dave Quady,
510.704.9353, davequady@att.net

We will search for Greater Sage-Grouse, Bald Eagles, and other wintering birds of the Eastern Sierra. Trip is limited to first 20 participants who sign up with leader after January 25. Detailed directions will be provided to those confirmed on trip. Lodging is available in Susanville; primitive camping is available in Honey Lake State Wildlife Area. Bring warm clothing, lunches for both days, and a scope if you have one.

Yosemite's Bird Life

Yosemite National Park

Friday–Sunday, June 3–5

Leaders: Dave Quady, 510.704.9353; davequady@att.net; and Bob Lewis

The park's lower and middle elevations are alive with singing birds in early June. A variety of habitats supports a diversity of bird life, typically including 7 flycatchers

FIELD TRIPS, continued on page 10

OBSERVATIONS

December 1–31, 2004
Bruce Mast



December is always an exciting month for birding for those willing to brave cold, wet weather. And birders forsook hearth and home in droves, scouting CBC assignments, tallying count day birds, adding to count week totals, and chasing down post-count rarities.

Loons to Ducks

The waters off Crissy Field, SF, remained the preferred haunts of a Red-necked Grebe throughout the month (mob). Elsewhere, Red-necks (birds, not Okies) were spotted from Ocean Boulevard in Moss Beach, SM, on the 1st (RST) and at Bodega Bay, SON, on the 11th (DWi). The Pt. Reyes CBC, held on the 18th, logged 7 Northern Fulmars just offshore at Abbott's Lagoon (reported by DWi). The Dec. 1 Moss Beach seawatch notched a Flesh-footed Shearwater (RST).

Careful observers turned up good numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese, occasional Snow and Ross's Geese, Brants, and Tundra Swans. Cackling Geese made the list reports in notable numbers, perhaps due to heightened interest in this newly christened species, perhaps due to an influx of birds. Eurasian Green-Winged Teal joined flocks of their American counterparts at Stevens Cr. Tidal Marsh, SCL (PD; mob); Martin Luther King Jr. RP in Oakland, ALA (DD; DWo, JS, BoB); and behind the Nob Hill Market in Redwood Shores, SM (RST; PBo). The Stevens Cr. site also included an American-Eurasian hybrid.

The Dec. 19 Oakland CBC logged a Harlequin Duck from the N. Boat (Emeryville/ Berkeley, ALA) for just the 2nd time in 31 years (reported by DQ & BL). In MRN, 2 Harlequins on Drake's Estero added to the Pt. Reyes CBC tally on the 18th (reported by DWi) and a 3rd Harley, seen on Tomales Bay on the 21st, further padded the count week numbers (JC). Meanwhile, a Harley drake spent most of

the month with the Surf Scoter flock at Mile Rock, in the Golden Gate, SF (BF; mob) and a Candlestick Pt. bird made the 2004 SF list on the 31st (AWi). Long-tailed Ducks cruised Bay Area waters throughout the month at the Berkeley Fishing Pier, ALA (RS; mob); the Petaluma River, SON/MRN (RS; LeL, AT); near Battery Wallace in the MRN Headlands (JC); off of Candlestick SP, SF (mob); at Princeton Harbor, SM (DSi; JRy, BK); and in Burlingame, SM (RST). Other notable duck reports included Wood and Tufted Ducks, White-winged and Black Scotters, Eurasian Wigeons, Barrow's Goldeneyes, and all three Mergansers.

Raptors to Alcids

Dec. 11 and 12 were deadly high-tide periods for area rails. At Waldo's Dike, MRN, herons and egrets gobbled up a **Yellow Rail** (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*), 4+ Black Rails, 3 Virginia Rails, and a probable Sora. Three more Black Rails ran the Ardea gauntlet to safety. It is not known whether suitable Yellow Rail documentation was excreted (BF; mob; reported by DB, PB). The story was the same for Black Rails at Ravenswood Open Preserve in East Palo Alto, SM, (GD, JRy) and at Bodega Harbor, SON, where small rodents were also on the menu (SB). Mountain Plovers returned to the plowed fields along Hwy 113, SOL, where flock counts grew to several hundred by the 12th (DL; mob). This month also saw periodic reports of Wandering Tattlers, far too few Ruddy Turnstones, occasional Surfbirds, and Red Phalaropes.

Jaeger counts were back down following the departure of Elegant Tern flocks but the Pt. Reyes CBC ID'd several Pomarine and 1 Parasitic Jaeger from the beach near Abbott's Lagoon (reported by DWi). A Laughing Gull was the highlight of a New Year's Eve seawatch from SF's Ocean Beach (PS). On Dec. 4, a 1st winter Glaucous Gull joined the *Larus* hordes at Venice

Beach in Half Moon Bay, SM (DSi). A 3rd winter bird from the same spot made the Crystal Springs CBC highlight reels on the 18th (JRy). Calero-Morgan Hill CBC tallied Glaucous at Almaden L., SCL, on the 26th (reported by AV). An ill and apparently oiled Black-legged Kittiwake spent Christmas Eve floating on Pillar Pt. Harbor, SM (BK). On Dec. 12, 2 Caspian Terns were late visitors to the delta at Holland Tract, CC (SG, FO, JE, DL). Ancient Murres were spied offshore at Abbott's Lagoon on the Pt Reyes CBC (reported by DWi) and at Venice Beach, SM, on the 29th (RT). On Dec. 6, a Cassin's Auklet ventured through the Golden Gate to Richardson Bay, MRN (DaL).



Brant.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Doves to Thrashers

Two Long-eared Owls, possibly a mated pair, occupied a roost in Ed Levin County Park, SCL, Dec. 9-11 (BRe, MRo, FV; mob). Their Short-eared cousins were observed hunting over Arrowhead Marsh, Oakland, ALA, on the 13th (KA); over Palo Alto Baylands, SCL, Dec. 11-12 (FV); and over Alvarado Cr. marsh, ALA, on the Dec. 19 Hayward-Fremont CBC (reported by PhG & PaG). A Dec. 28 hike at Veterans Park, Livermore, ALA, flushed a Short-Eared Owl seeking shelter from the rain in the tall grass (SH).

Eight or more Lewis's Woodpeckers were found at L. Berryessa, NAP, on the 4th (LK; JeH, JoH). An erudite Williamson's

Sapsucker frequented the College of SM, beginning the 18th (EG; mob). According to RST, there are just 3 prior Williamson's records for SM. The Crystal Springs CBC checked off Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Filoli (Woodside), SM (reported by AE). Its Red-naped relative made both the Pt Reyes and Oakland CBCs.

Pt Reyes CBC recorded the region's only Least Flycatcher at Olema Marsh (reported by DWi). Tropical Kingbirds took in the pastoral scene at Spaletta (Historic C) Ranch, PRNS, on the 19th (LL) and admired the suburban scene in Walnut Cr., CC, on the 21st (CO). Santa Teresa Park, SCL, hosted a Rock Wren on the 23rd (JaP) while a late House Wren made the Pt. Reyes CBC count for the first time since 1978 (DE). Dec. 12-27, a late Blue-gray Gnatcatcher also made Santa Teresa Park its winter digs (JaP; SC, KBL). In MRN, a Blue-gray found on the 22nd showed preference for Tennessee Valley (DaL). On Dec. 4, a Townsend's Solitaire joined Robins and Waxwings at a Pyracantha buffet in Belmont, SM (RST). The next day, a Townsend's Solitaire returned to Moraga, CC, for the 3rd winter in 8 years (NW; MS).

Wood Warblers to Finches

Western Tanagers appear to be overwintering this year, with 8 sightings scattered throughout the month in SF, ALA, and SCL. Summer Tanager returned to GGP, SF, on the 24th (ASH; CDL). A Green-tailed Towhee discovered in Orinda, CC, was a 1st record for the Oakland CBC (SOB; DQ). Birders encountered a rare wintering Chipping Sparrow in Concord, CC, on the 12th (SG, FO, JE, DL). A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow returned to its winter perch at Arrowhead marsh, where it was a regular high-tide attraction Dec. 12-29 (mob). Another Nelson's made a high tide appearance in Cogswell Marsh, (Hayward RS, ALA) on the 26th (BR). A Red Fox Sparrow found its way down the Pacific Coast to GGP on Dec. 4, where it lingered most of the month (IS, SK; ASH, DM). First-winter Harris's Sparrows made it to Mountain View Shoreline Park, SCL, on Dec. 3-4, (PLT; mob) and up to Occidental, SON, on the

Wood Warbler Sightings

Nashville Warbler

12/1, 23	Lafayette Park, SF	PMC
12/12	Glen Cyn. Park, SF	ASH
12/17	GGP, SF	JW
12/18	Half Moon Bay, SM	JRy
12/28	Presidio, SF	SF CBC
12/28	Middle L., GGP, SF	SF CBC

Yellow Warbler

12/3	Middle L., GGP, SF	DM
12/4	L. Merritt, Oakland, ALA	LG
12/19	Berkeley, ALA	Oakland CBC
12/17-20	Geng Rd., Palo Alto, SCL	MRo, MM

Magnolia Warbler

12/11	Bodega Bay, SON	DWi
12/28-31	Pine L., SF	SF CBC

Black-throated Gray Warbler

12/12	Concord, CC	SG, FO, JE, DL
12/28	Strybing Arboretum, GGP,	SF CBC
12/20	Mission City Cemetery, SCL	RJ SCL, SCL

Hermit Warbler

12/20	Los Trancos Open Space Preserve	DS
12/26	Coyote Cr. Golf Course, SCL	WS; BRe, LO

Palm Warbler

12/1	Lafayette Park, SF	PMC
12/3-22	San Tomas Aquino Cr., SCL, SCL	MM, DWi, BB, KBI
12/18	Half Moon Bay, SM	JRy

Black-and-white Warbler

12/18	Sawyer Ridge, SM	Crystal Springs CBC
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Northern Waterthrush

12/20-24	Charleston Rd. Marsh, SCL	RJ; SR, DLe
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Wilson's Warbler

12/19	Pt. Isabel, El Cerrito, CC	Oakland CBC
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Abbreviations for Observers: DA, David Armstrong; KA, Ken Archambault; BB, Bill Bousman; BeB, Betty Burridge; BoB, Bob Battagin; DB, Dennis Braddy; KB, Ken Burton; KBL, Kim Blythe; PB, Patricia Braddy; PaB, Pat Boor; SB, Sara Blauman; HC, Hugh Cotter; JC, Josiah Clark; LC, Les Chibana; SC, Shao Cheng; ADM, Al DeMartini; DD, Dave Dillon; GD, Gary Deghi; JD, Jim Danzenbaker; PD, Peggy Don; AE, Al Eisner; DE, Daniel Edelstein; JE, Jim Edgar; MWE, Mark Eaton; BF, Brian Fitch; MF, Mike Feighner; RF, Rich Ferrick; RFi, RF; EG, Eric Goodill; LG, Laura Gee; PaG, Pat Gordon; PhG, Phil Gordon; SG, Steve Glover; ASH, Alan Hopkins; GH, Garth Harwood; JeH, Jeanne Hubbard; JoH, John Hubbard; KH, Keith Hansen; LH, Lisa Hug; SH, Steve Huckabone; AJ, Alvaro Jaramillo; RJ, Richard Jeffers; BK, Barbara Kossy; LK, Larry Kent; SK, Stefanie Krantz; BL, Bob Lewis; CL, Cindy Lieurance; CDL, Calvin Lou; DL, Don Lewis; DaL, David Lukas; DLe, Dave Lewis; JL, John Luther; LL, Les Lieurance; LeL, Leonard Liu; PLT, Peter LaTourette; RL, Robin Leong; RLe, Rick Lebaudour; RLi, Randy Little; DM, Dan Murphy; JM, Joe Morlan; JMu, Joan Murphy; KMK, Kevin McKereghan; MM, Mike Mammoser; PM, Peter Metropulos; PMC, Pat McCulloch; SM, Steve Miller; CO, Chet Ogan; FO, Frances Oliver; KO, Kris Olson; LO, Larry Owens; SOB, Sean O'Brien; BP, Bob Power; JP, John Poole; JaP, Janna Pausier; KP, Kay Partelow; PP, Peter Pyle; DQ, Dave Quady; BR, Bob Richmond; Bre, BRe; JR, Jean Richmond; JRo, Jim Roethe; JRy, Jennifer Rycenga; MR, Mark Rauzon; MRo, Mike Rogers; SR, Steve Rottenborn; DS, David Suddjian; DSi, Dan Singer; ES, Emilie Strauss; ESe, Emily Serkin; IS, Ivan Samuels; JS, Judi Sierra; MS, Malcolm Sproul; PS, Paul Saraceni; RS, Rich Stallcup; RSc, Rusty Scalf; WS, Willie Skinner; AT, Anthony Turmac; RT, Richard Trinkner; RST, Ron Thorn; MU, Myra Ulvang; AV, Ann Verdi; DVP, David Vander Pluym; FV, Frank Vanslager; AW, Alan Wight; AWi, Adam Winer; CW, Chris Wolfe; DW, Denise Wight; DWe, Dave Weber; DWi, Dave Wimpfheimer; DWo, Dennis Wolff; JW, Jeff Wall; NW, Nat Weber; JY, James Yurchenco; MZ, Matt Zlatunich;

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers, "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CBC, Christmas Bird Count; CC, Contra Costa; CCFS, Coyote Cr. Field Station; Cr, Cr.; Cyn., Canyon; DENWR, Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L, Lake; MRN, Marin; MTY, Monterey; N., North; NAP, Napa; NSMWA, NAP-SON Marshes Wildlife Area; Pt., Point; PRNS, Pt Reyes National Seashore; RP, Regional Park; Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RS, Regional Shoreline; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant

25th (BeB). White-throated and Swamp Sparrows gave birders additional incentive to scan every sparrow flock. On the 5th, a single Lapland Longspur joined a Horned Lark flock in a newly disced field near Hwy 113, SOL. (KMK).

An Orinda, CC, feeder attracted a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak on the 11th (JRo). An Inverness, MRN, feeder achieved the same result on the Dec. 18 Pt Reyes CBC (reported by DWi). On the 5th, a Yellow-headed Blackbird stood out from a Red-winged flock along Shiloh Rd., SOL. (KMK). SF hosted Orchard Orioles at L. Merced Dec 23-28 (PM) and in the

Presidio Hills Restoration Area on the 24th (JC). On the Dec. 20 San Jose CBC, Sunnyvale WPCP was the hotspot for both Bullock's and Hooded Orioles (SM, CW). In SF, a Bullock's was spotted at Pine L. on the 30th (DM, JMu). The only Cassin's Finch this month came from Moss Beach, SM, on the 1st (RST). Red Crossbills continued their irruptive ways throughout the region. In SCL on the 20th, Palo Alto CBC found Lawrence's Goldfinches at Foothills Park (RLi, KP) and in Monte Bello OSP (BRe, FV; GH). Finally, the Pt Reyes CBC recorded several Evening Grosbeaks in Pt Reyes Station, MRN (reported by DWi).

Moorhen near the Golden Gate Fields race-track, and a selasphorus hummingbird in Joaquin Miller Park. Celebrating their mid-year elevation to full species status, a flock of 38 Cackling Geese proudly displayed at Upper San Leandro Reservoir. They were formerly considered the "small form" of Canada Goose. (Not-so) Wild Turkeys continued their rise. A single bird was found just two years ago; this year produced 22 individuals in three count areas. On the exotic front, a Mitred Parakeet was in the west Berkeley waterfront, another first for the count. All these unusual birds are subject to acceptance by the count's Rare Bird Committee.

There are always some misses. Lake Merritt's long-lived Cattle Egret was missed and may have expired. Ruddy Turnstone, whose numbers seem to be diminishing locally (we found only one last year), was missed for the first time in 31 years.

A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Arrowhead Marsh was found before and after Count Day but missed that day. It was the first ever reported in the Oakland count circle during Count Week. A Long-tailed Duck off the Berkeley pier was also a before-and-after bird, and also stubbornly absent on Count Day. Other Count Week birds seen on only one day included Brant, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, and Barn Swallow. This year 12 feeder watchers reported 39 species, including two White-throated Sparrows.

For many, the most enjoyable part of a count may be the evening's compilation dinner. Again this year, Golden Gate Audubon Hospitality Coordinator Susanne Shields, assisted by Project Open Hand and a dedicated group of volunteers, provided a delicious dinner. Nearly 100 diners (20 more than last year) enjoyed a bounteous feast of healthful, nutritious food. A festive dinner was followed by a tribute to Russ Wilson for his long service to Golden Gate Audubon.

Mark your calendars: the 65th annual Oakland Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 18, 2005.

Highlights of the San Francisco Christmas Bird Count, held on Dec. 28, 2004, will be featured in the March *Gull*.

by Dave Quady, Oakland CBC Co-Compiler

(4 Empidonax), 3 vireos, 7 warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage. Trip is limited to first 20 participants who sign up with leaders after February 25. Past participants have found it

convenient to camp at Hodgdon Meadow in park or to stay in campgrounds or commercial lodging near park's Big Oak Flat entrance. Detailed information, lodging suggestions, will be provided to those confirmed on trip. Carpooling is encouraged. Participants should bring warm clothes, rainwear, rubber boots for wet meadows,



Wilson's Warbler.

and a large flashlight for owling. Bring lunches for Saturday and Sunday and be prepared to walk about 3 miles each day.

Birding in Panama

April 2005

This is the Latin America Committee's 2005 trip to Panama. Up-to-date information can be obtained from Bob Risebrough at 510.549.2476. See January *Gull* for details.

Birding in New York City

May 2005

Leader: Alan Hopkins, 415.664.0983

Golden Gate Audubon and Classic Escapes Nature and Cultural Journeys are planning a six-day trip to New York for May 2005. See December *Gull* for details.

Birding in Greece

Long-time Bay Area birder Harry Fuller will lead a Golden Gate Audubon-sponsored trip to Lesvos, Greece, with two days set aside to visit ancient Athens. Birders can expect to see Flamingo, Red-footed Falcon, Rock Nuthatch, Orphean and Subalpine Warblers, Black Stork, Masked Shrike, Spotted Redshank, Collared Flycatcher, Ruddy Shelduck, Hoopoe, and lots of shorebirds. The opportunity to enjoy great food and wine offers an additional bonus. The trip is limited to 18 participants. Dates are Saturday, April 30–Sunday, May 8. Contact the leader at www.towhee.net for details.

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education and member activities!

Golden Eagle (\$1000 or more)

Anonymous, Kevin & Susan Consey (stock)

Least Tern (\$200 to \$499)

David & Annie Armstrong, Helen Desai, Dan & Joan Murphy

Clapper Rail (\$100 to \$199)

George F. Bing, Marjorie Blackwell, Judith Dunham, Deborah Farson, Dorothy Kakimoto, Russell M. Rector, John V. Sudall, Laurie Umeh, L.L. Watts, Elise White, Lawrence J. Yabroff

Gifts (to \$99)

Bonnie Benard, Nel Benninghof & Nick Despota, Robert & Marion Blumberg, Joan Broer, Virginia Carder, Sally Cedarblade, Brion Charles, Rudolph Cook, Paul Cort (Restore-A-Thon), Hugh Cotter (Restore-A-Thon), John Cunkle, Marianne Eilmann & Alan Leavitt, Joanne Frudden, Nikki Nahmens Gage, Mr. & Mrs. George C. Gorman, Eliza T. Greene & James A. Tiemstra, Janette Gross, Sarah Hall,

Christine Hargreaves, Deirdre Henderson, George Homem, Robert Houghteling, Steve Johnson, Jenny Jackson Kee, M.K. Kew, Jane Latham, J.E. & A.C. Lennon, Carole Litwin, Mildred Lowther, Robert L. Mayer, Michelle Mehlhorn, Barbara Moulton (Restore-A-Thon), Marie Noelle Murphy, Barbara Muskopf, Amy Evans McClure, Charles McCulloch, Jane & Tom McIntyre (Restore-a-thon), Sylvia McLaughlin, Laszlo Nadasdi, Cordelia Neal, Valorie Olsen, Richard W. Poley, Ellen Price, Gloria Ramos, Roma Rehfisch, David Rice, Eileen Richey, Karen Roy, Jennifer Rycenga & Peggy Macres, Robert & Mary Lu Schreiber, Mary Small, Barbara Taylor Smith, Sheila A. Sondik, Tom & Nicki Spillane, Linda Swanson, Ruth Tobey (Restore-A-Thon), Elizabeth Warrick, Mark Westlund, William W. White

In-Kind

Personal Computer: Jim Carmichael

Gift Memberships

Sherida Bush: Timothy Platt

Robert Dennis Claessens: Mrs. Marilyn Claessens

Tom Heckman: Ruben Lee

Jean F. Ross: Aaron and Shelly Ross

Eliza Welch: Ann S. Bentley

CASINO, continued from page 1

Despite this vocal opposition, stopping a casino is tough work. There are heavy financial interests behind these projects.

Arrowhead Marsh has a significant population of endangered California Clapper Rail. A recent census counted 61 Clapper Rails, which, according to latest population estimates, represents more than 5 percent of the total California Clapper Rail population in the world. Thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds use the tidal and seasonal wetlands at the park and its surrounding waters. Scientists have concluded that the area is a site of regional importance for shorebirds (Stenzel, L.E., C.M. Hickey, J.E. Kjelmyr, and G.W. Page. 2002. Abundance and distribution of shorebirds in the San Francisco Bay Area. *Western Birds* 33(2):69-98). Several bird species breed there, including American Avocets, Black-necked

Stilts, and Northern Pintails.

Golden Gate Audubon's Eco-Oakland Program uses the park's wetlands to provide unique environmental education and nature restoration experiences to thousands of East Oakland youngsters and their families.

The impacts of the proposed casino complex on wildlife species would be disastrous, and the presence of such intense human activity would mean the opportunity for children and adults to have a serene, natural experience at the MLK shoreline park would disappear forever.

How You Can Help

Oakland residents, please call or write Mayor Jerry Brown and your city councilperson and ask them to oppose the casino (see contact information below).

Non-Oakland residents, please call or write Mayor Jerry Brown (he is run-

ning for state attorney general and may not want to be known as the casino candidate), Governor Schwarzenegger, and State Senator Don Perata and ask them to oppose the casino. Calls, letters, and e-mails to your local assembly representatives and state senators will also help, as will letters and calls to Representative Barbara Lee and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer. If we can generate significant political opposition to the casino, we have a chance of stopping it.

Points to Make in Your Letter, E-mail or Phone Call:

- 1) If you visit and enjoy the MLK shoreline park, describe how the traffic and potential noise impacts will significantly impact your nature experience at the park and ruin it for nature education.

CASINO, continued on page 12

Are You a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon?

Did you know Golden Gate Audubon, a chapter of National Audubon Society (NAS), is an independent organization with its own separate budget? We receive less than \$3 of your \$20-plus NAS membership—which does not begin to cover the cost of producing the *Gull*, managing our extensive conservation and environmental education programs in San Francisco and the East Bay, and offering field trips, classes, and monthly slide-lectures. If you join Golden Gate Audubon *directly* you will have the satisfaction of knowing that 100 percent of your Supporting Membership helps to support our *local* programs.

PLEASE BECOME A GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SUPPORTING MEMBER TODAY!

Individual

- 1 year \$25
 2 years \$45
 3 years \$65

Family

- 1 year \$40
 2 years \$75
 3 years \$110

Student

- 1 year \$20
 2 years \$35
 3 years \$50

Other (1-year)

- Clapper Rail \$100-199
 Least Tern \$200-499
 Peregrine Falcon \$500-999
 Golden Eagle \$1,000 or more

Membership: \$ _____

My check, payable to **Golden Gate Audubon Society**, is enclosed

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